

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 422  
By Walley

A RESOLUTION to honor U.S. District Judge Odell Horton on the occasion of his retirement.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this legislative body should recognize those exemplary citizens who in their years of work have performed with extraordinary dedication and unprecedented devotion; and

WHEREAS, the Honorable Odell Horton, is most assuredly one such estimable citizen deserving of special recognition; he has served with honor and distinction for 17 years as U.S. District Court Judge for the Western District of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, appointed to this important position by President Jimmy Carter in 1980, Judge Horton has built a reputation for integrity and fairness while presiding over some of the most taxing and complex cases in the Western District; and

WHEREAS, in addition to being chief judge of the Western District of Tennessee for seven years, Judge Horton presided over numerous high profile cases, including a 1978 class action lawsuit filed by 128 residents of Toone, Tennessee whose health had been adversely affected by groundwater contamination; and

WHEREAS, Judge Horton has skillfully presided with a soothing manner and a strong sense of dignity and integrity and has been, first and foremost, respectful of jurors and lawyers alike; he developed those admirable traits as a young boy who grew up in a two-room house in Bolivar and whose parents worked to support him and his four siblings; and

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WHEREAS, prior to his sterling tenure as U.S. District Court Judge, Odell Horton served with probity as a defense lawyer, an assistant U.S. attorney, a criminal court judge, president of LeMoyne-Owen College, director of hospitals and health services for the city and as a federal bankruptcy judge; and

WHEREAS, his ambition to enter the legal profession was influenced by a lawyer he came to know as he worked as a shoeshine boy in a Bolivar barber shop and of the injustice he saw around him while growing up in West Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, widely respected and admired by his peers and the attorneys practicing before him, Judge Horton has been described as a “mentor to young and old lawyers alike”, and as someone who has been “able to temper the power of his position with compassion when appropriate”; and

WHEREAS, although Judge Horton is retiring from senior status to inactive status, he will still be presiding over cases when invited to do so by other federal districts; and

WHEREAS, he plans to spend more time with his grandson and enjoying his hobbies, including gardening after he retires; and

WHEREAS, Judge Horton exemplifies the spirit and dedication that is characteristic of a great Tennessean; and

WHEREAS, men of his talent and stature do not often walk among us, and Judge Horton should be specially recognized as a distinguished representative of the true spirit of the Volunteer State; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE-HUNDREDTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That we hereby honor Judge Odell Horton upon his meritorious service to the good people of Tennessee; salute his remarkable and productive tenure as Judge of the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Tennessee, and extend to him our best wishes for a happy and fulfilling retirement and continued success in his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation to Judge Horton with this final clause omitted from such copy.